



## **NEWS FROM NOAA**

**NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

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### **MONTEREY BAY SANCTUARY, AQUARIUM ANNOUNCE ENVIRONMENTAL CARTOON CONTEST WINNERS**

NOAA's Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and the Monterey Bay Aquarium today announced the winners of their environmental message cartoon contest during the aquarium's Día del Niño (Day of the Child) event.

The cartoon contest involved comic strips designed by middle and high school students in the central California counties of Monterey and Santa Cruz. The cartoons support the theme of protecting area watersheds and the coastal and ocean waters of the Monterey Bay sanctuary. The goal of the contest is to educate the public about the importance of ocean stewardship.

"We are delighted that the contest has sparked such extensive involvement of schools, teachers, students, and community representatives," said Dawn Hayes, Monterey Bay sanctuary education and outreach coordinator. "We received more than 200 submissions and were just blown away by the creativity, artistry and coastal and ocean conservation messages in the cartoon strips."

The top 20 strips were honored during the awards ceremony at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, with the \$200 grand prize awarded to Lorena Herrera, a student at Alisal High School in Salinas. Her comic strip will be displayed on the side of Monterey-Salinas Transit buses with bilingual text (English and Spanish) about behaviors that support ocean protection. It is estimated that the bus displays will be seen by 500,000 Monterey County residents in addition to nearly seven million annual Central Coast visitors.

Six other contestants from Alisal and North Salinas High Schools, Monte Vista Christian School, Rolling Hills Middle School and Monterey Bay Charter School received runner-up prizes. Before the aquarium opened to the public the day of the ceremony, the top 20 artists took part in a special private drawing workshop led by well-known Chicano artist Jose G. Ortiz, who is the visual art director of the Alisal Center for the Fine Arts.

The cartoon contest is part of the Monterey Bay sanctuary's Multicultural Education for Resource Issues Threatening Oceans (MERITO) Program. MERITO works with local educators and community members to promote sanctuary stewardship among cross-cultural audiences in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. The Monterey

Bay Aquarium's Latino Outreach program worked with sanctuary staff to support this public education effort. The volunteer judging panel included scientists and educators representing the Monterey Bay Aquarium and the Monterey Bay sanctuary, together with local artist and art educator Jim Sarno.

Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary stretches along 276 miles of central California coast and encompasses more than 5,300 square miles of ocean area. Renowned for its scenic beauty and remarkable productivity, the sanctuary supports one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, including 33 species of marine mammals, 94 species of seabirds, 345 species of fishes and thousands of marine invertebrates and plants.

The NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program, which manages the Monterey Bay sanctuary, seeks to increase the public awareness of America's marine resources and maritime heritage by conducting scientific research, monitoring, exploration and educational programs. Today, the sanctuary program manages 13 national marine sanctuaries and one marine national monument that together encompass more than 150,000 square miles of America's ocean and Great Lakes natural and cultural resources.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is celebrating 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Commission of Fish and Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America's scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Program: <http://sanctuaries.noaa.gov>

NOAA Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary: <http://montereybay.noaa.gov>

MERITO Program: <http://montereybay.noaa.gov/educate/merito/welcome.html>